

Indoor Environments Network

Quarterly

Highlights of Network News and Events

In this quarter's update:

- Asthma
- Environmental Tobacco Smoke
- Radon
- New Products & Resources

January–March 2006

ASTHMA

www.epa.gov/asthma/index.html

Asthma Health Outcomes

On Wednesday, November 16, 2005, EPA and the University of Michigan School of Public Health released the results of the *Asthma Health Outcomes Project*, a major new study of community asthma interventions. The University of Michigan screened over 400 community-based asthma programs with environmental management components and then conducted a detailed examination of more than 200 programs to determine factors associated with successful health outcomes, based on complete and credible project evaluations. Overall, the study concludes that community-based programs designed to manage environmental triggers, and which add clinical management of residual symptoms, typically produce positive health outcomes.

This study is valuable because it traces health outcomes far beyond the previous limits of published studies and provides concrete, empirical evidence that both communities and clinicians have demanded to build and support effective asthma intervention programs both locally and nationally.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE

www.epa.gov/smokefree

Smoke-free Home Pledge Campaign Wins Two Awards



The Indoor Environment Division's re-branded *Smoke-free Home Pledge Campaign* won two Silver Awards from the League of American Communications Professionals in their 2005 Spotlight Awards competition. One Silver Award is for "Excellence in Development" and the second Silver Award is for "Most Inspirational." Although the development budget was minimal, the Campaign materials (brochure, kit, Web site, and more) ranked 34 on the list of the Top 100 Communication Materials of 2005 along side

materials from Fortune 500 companies, which have million dollar budgets. To order these award winning *Smoke-free Home Pledge Campaign* publications, call IAQ INFO at 1-800-438-4318 or download from the *Smoke-free Homes* Web site at www.epa.gov/smokefree/publications.html.



RADON

www.epa.gov/radon/index.html

National Leadership Conference on Housing and Radon

Tom Kelly, Indoor Environments Division Director, made a feature presentation during the plenary session of the National Conference on Housing and Radon held on December 2, 2005, in Washington, DC. Mr. Kelly emphasized that the science regarding radon's devastating health consequences has become ever clearer during recent years. He stressed that cost-effective measures are now well known for identifying and mitigating radon hazards in existing homes and for preventing hazards in the first place in new housing. He explained that policy and action have not kept pace with what is known, and that the political will to address the issue varies widely among states and localities and from one federal agency to another.

The National Conference had five main goals:

- ❖ Expand the number of groups committed to working on reducing the health burden from radon and the resources available to do this work;
- ❖ Develop an agenda of policy and other strategies for improving implementation of radon testing, mitigation, and protective construction standards;
- ❖ Determine next steps to achieve the policy and other strategies;
- ❖ Specify the messages about radon necessary to accomplish the agenda; and,
- ❖ Develop a collective statement of commitment to the messages and action agenda that will be adopted by participating groups.

The Conference organizers were the Alliance for Healthy Homes, American Lung Association, Environmental Law Institute, Children's Environmental Health Network, National Center for Healthy Housing, and the National Safety Council. Participants included leaders from a wide range of organizations and agencies already engaged on radon, including nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, trade associations, and associations of government officials, radon professionals, code organizations, attorneys, and researchers.

Radon in Schools Excellence Award

The 2006 Radon Excellence in Schools Award will be presented at the 6th Annual *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* National Symposium from January 12-14, 2006, in Washington, DC. The award recognizes a school or school district that has effectively addressed an elevated level of radon in schools, modeled appropriate risk communication, and demonstrated best practices in their approach. The selection process is currently underway.

National Radon Action Month

January has been designated as National Radon Action Month. Many state and local radon programs conduct education and outreach activities in their areas. These activities focus attention on the health risk of radon (the #1 cause of lung cancer for non-smokers) and encourage the public to test their homes, and to use cost-effective techniques to reduce their risk where elevated radon levels are detected.

Some examples of activities taking place during National Radon Action Month include:

- ❖ The Governor of Connecticut's is issuing a proclamation and authorizing a large radon awareness banner displayed outside the State Office Building. The state will also include informational fliers in all state employees' payroll envelopes. Radon Public Service Announcements will be aired by local television stations throughout the state.
- ❖ The American Lung Association (ALA) of Minnesota's Health House program will work with 15 local Lung Associations to carry out media relations campaigns about radon. Each local chapter will provide 300 free short term radon test kits to the public. A follow up letter will be sent in March reminding residents to test their homes.
- ❖ The ALA of Minnesota is running two media relations campaigns, one in greater Minnesota and the other targeted into the Twin Cities. Two thousand free short term radon test kits will be distributed to consumers who request a kit online. General radon information will be provided on the type of home they intend to test: slab on grade, crawl space or basement. In addition to educating the public, ALA will be conducting follow up activities, including phone calls and postcard reminders about testing and interpreting test results.
- ❖ Additionally, in December, the ALA Health House program offered a builder training class and, for the first time, incorporated an enhanced radon-resistant new construction module. In 2006, new homes registered with the Health House program will be inspected to ensure radon-resistant features were used and then tracked in a database.
- ❖ The National Association of Counties (NACo), in recognizing National Radon Awareness Month, has launched a new County Radon Outreach Program for member counties. The program, through the distribution of radon test kits and informational materials, is intended to raise awareness of radon, its health effects, and mitigation techniques. To learn more about NACo's radon program contact Ms. Kelly Zonderwyk at (202) 942-4224 or kzonderwyk@naco.org.

NEW PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

Implementing An Asthma Home Visit Program: 10 Steps To Help Health Plans Get Started

As part of a comprehensive asthma management program, home visits can provide an extra level of support. This support contributes to the success and sustainability of a health plan's asthma disease management program. EPA's new guide, *Implementing An Asthma Home Visit Program: 10 Steps To Help Health Plans Get Started*, offers step-by-step instructions on how to start an asthma home visit program with emphasis on environmental risk factor management. Compiled with input from seven health care organizations, the guide incorporates these organizations' experiences establishing and operating home visit programs.

Implementing An Asthma Home Visit Program: 10 Steps To Help Health Plans Get Started
(continued from page 3)

The document is intended to be used primarily by health plans seeking to enhance established asthma management program services.

To obtain a free copy of this guide, visit www.epa.gov/asthma or request multiple copies by calling IAQ INFO at 1-800-438-4318.

Got News?

The *IEN Quarterly Newsletter* is your **key opportunity** to share with the entire Indoor Environments Network information on your organization's upcoming events, trainings, and publications. To feature your story, please send your article (100 words or less) and photo or graphic to: Lou Witt, Partner Network Support Coordinator, at witt.lou@epa.gov.

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EPA Mission

The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency is to protect human health and the environment.